

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 03426 101009Z
ACTION SS-25

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P 100945Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3883

S E C R E T TAIPEI 3426

EXDIS

MILITARY TO HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

DEPARTMENT: PLEASE PASS TO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI FOR POLAD ONLY
FROM AMBASSADOR TAIPEI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, TW, US
SUBJECT: MILITARY PERSONNEL CHANGES

REF: (A) CINCPAC MESSAGE DTG 022224Z JUN 77, (B) CINCPAC MESSAGE
DTG 022226Z JUN 77, (C) CINCPAC MESSAGE DTG 080230Z JUN 77

1. REFERENCES A AND B REPORTED THE DOWNGRADING OF THE
COMUSTDC BILLET TO 08 AND THE BILLETS OF CHIEF OF STAFF,
USTDC, AND CHIEF, MAAG CHINA TO 06, ALL UPON ROTATION OF
THE INCUMBENT.

2. IN REFERENCE A, PLAD ASKED FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
PROSPECTIVE DOWNGRADING OF THE COMUSTDC AND CHIEF MAAG
POSITIONS IN TAIWAN. OUR RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO THESE
QUESTIONS.

3. QUESTIONS A AND B: IS GROC AWARE OF THE IMPENDING
DOWNGRADING OF COMUSTDC AND THE TDC CHIEF OF STAFF
POSITIONS THIS SUMMER? IS GROC AWARE THAT THE MAAG
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CHIEF, BGEN FORNEY, WILL BE REPLACED UPON DEPARTURE BY
A COLONEL?

--- ANSWER: BOTH MAAG AND TDC HAVE INFORMALLY ADVISED
THE GROC OF THE DOWNGRADING OF COMUSTDC, THE TDC CHIEF
OF STAFF POSITION, AND THE FACT THAT MAAG CHIEF BRIGADIER
GENERAL FORNEY WILL BE REPLACED UPON DEPARTURE BY A

COLONEL. IN ADDITION, BY A LETTER DATED JUNE 8, 1977, DCM NOTIFIED MOFA ADMINISTRATIVE VICE MINISTER FRED CH'EN OF FOREGOING PLANS, REQUESTING THAT HE REGARD THEM AS CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL ANNOUNCED. THE COMUSTDC CHANGE OF COMMAND WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN LATE JULY AND VICE ADMIRAL SNYDER WILL PROBABLY LEAVE TAIWAN ON JULY 31. WE HOPE THAT GENERAL FORNEY WILL BE ABLE TO STAY ON THE JOB THROUGH THE END OF SEPTEMBER. NEITHER WE NOR THE GROC HAVE ANY INFORMATION, HOWEVER, ABOUT WHEN TDC CHIEF OF STAFF WILL BE DEPARTING OR THE NAME OF HIS REPLACEMENT? INCUMBENT HAS BEEN IN TAIWAN ONLY A LITTLE OVER ONE YEAR.

4. QUESTION C: WOULD POSSIBLE DEPARTURE OF BGEN FORNEY THIS YEAR, RATHER THAN NEXT, PRESENT ANY SPECIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM? WOULD "DOWNGRADING" OF MAAG POSITION BE MORE STRONGLY FELT IF IT WAS VIRTUALLY CONCURRENT WITH TDC CHANGE?

--- ANSWER: ALTHOUGH THE GROC WOULD NATURALLY PREFER THAT CHANGES IN THE RANKS OF OUR TOP MILITARY OFFICERS TAKE PLACE AS SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE DEPARTURE OF BRIGADIER GENERAL FORNEY THIS YEAR WILL PRESENT ANY SERIOUS PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM. THE GROC IS ALREADY AWARE OF PROBABLE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION TO REDUCE SEVERAL MAAG'S AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE ROC, TO AN OFFICE OF DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH SIX PEOPLE, AND THIS IN ITSELF, MAKES THE RETENTION OF BRIGADIER GENERAL FORNEY IMPOSSIBLE BEYOND SEPTEMBER 30, 1977, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.

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5. QUESTION D: ARE THERE ANY OTHER FOREIGN AFFAIRS ASPECTS OF THESE PENDING MILITARY CHANGES OF WHICH I MIGHT NOT BE AWARE?

--- ANSWER: THE GROC DOES NOT WELCOME THESE ACTIONS BY THE USG (I.E., DOWNGRADINGS PLUS SHIFT FROM MAAG TO ODC), SINCE THEY SUGGEST A WEAKENING OF OUR MILITARY TIES. WE DO NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT DOWNGRADING THE RANKS OF SENIOR US MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES IS, BY ITSELF, SERIOUSLY UPSETTING TO THE GROC, WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED BY US AND BY PRESS REPORTS, ETC., FOR THIS GENERAL DOWNWARD TREND IN US MILITARY REPRESENTATION HERE.

6. ALSO, PLEASE CONVEY MY PERSONAL THANKS TO ADMIRAL WIESNER FOR KEEPING ME INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING TDC AND PERSONNEL ACTIONS OVER RECENT WEEKS. UNGER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED.

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